



VOL. XXXVIII.

The Maine Farmer.

S. L. BOARDMAN, Editor.

Our Home, Our Country, and Our Brother Man.

The Man at his Back."

The most important man in the world is the "man at his back." To understand exactly who this man is, and what he does to become so important, it is necessary to know something—a very little will be sufficient—of business life other than that of farming. Among business men, those engaged in commercial transactions, a "backer" is a very significant term, and a man who is a "backer" is generally looked upon with great consideration. Of young men starting in business, and little known, the inquiry is often made, "who are his backers?" and if upon investigation there are men behind him who have the means and are themselves willing to trust him, it is at once set down as "all right." In so far as many men do a large business who are themselves not responsible, and fortunes have been made by those engaged in mercantile occupations, who have been so fortunate as to have "good backers." The success of all important enterprises, say, more, the very prosperity and enterprise of social and business life depends almost wholly upon those men called by this somewhat rough but expressive term.

Now the farmer is the one great "backer" of the country. The success of every enterprise and pursuit, the prosperity of States and Kingdoms depend upon him. All the diversified industries of a country which contribute to its growth and wealth, and which are so closely blended and intertwined that no one can be removed without injury to the whole, depend upon and are kept in existence by the farm and the labor of the farmer. It all runs back to this—and the man who grows cattle and wheat, who tills trees and clears land, who builds walls and digs drains—thoroughly subduing the earth and fitting it to produce more human food—becomes at once a "backer" to men who control money, but whose wealth alone could never, directly, be got for the earth and the work of those men who cultivate it.

A most forcible illustration of this truth is still vivid in the minds of all our readers. The great civil war in our country is not yet forgotten; the hosts who went forth to battle, who from being producers came to be consumers, and were fed by the fruits of the earth, sown and gathered by other hands, are still remembered; and in the weary years while immense armies were maintained at an enormous expense, the still greater army who remained upon the farms and grew the corn, and wheat, and beef for those who fought, have not lost their importance now that peace has been secured. And this instance is but one of many which the history of the ages is full. The men who fight—and when it becomes necessary for men to fight, production, to a great extent ceases—have always been "backed" by those who produce that which men cannot fight or even exist.

There has been a great deal of time wasted in the writing and reading of meaningless eulogies about the dignity and importance of the farmers' vocation; and we trust we are not going to inflict upon our readers, even for a moment, any such sham. But it is well enough, once in a while, to let the farmer think in a practical sort of way, of the real consequences—not to his own welfare, for he can see that without being told it—of his own single-handed labors, to the great nation of which his farm, and the still greater civilization, of which he himself is a part. Reflecting upon this, and assuring him that he is a "backer" of the most necessary sort, and should strive to realize his importance in this capacity, we leave him, clearly entitled to the honor, and worthy to fill so conspicuous a position.

We are going to lay down the pen, but there is one other thought: The question still comes—"Who are his backers?" We answer, earth and nature, Earth, the great mother of us all, and Nature the faithful distributor of every allowance which can aid the perfecting of that which the soil so bountifully gives for man's wants. These are "backers" that have never failed.

The Lewiston Convention.

"We ought to and will have aousing meeting." Such is the language of one of the wide awake and influential farmers of Androscoggin county, writing us under date of 18th inst., in reference to the Farmers' Convention at Lewiston, which opened January 10th. This correspondent informs us that the City Council Rooms have been secured for the special meeting of the Board, which convenes on the 18th, and that a hall has been secured for holding the public meetings of the Convention. He also continues: "Considerable pains have been taken to notify and interest the public in it, and a lively interest is manifested. I think there will be a goodly attendance from this vicinity."

We have no doubt there will, not only from Androscoggin county, but from other parts of the State. Above all, the young farmers turn out in full force. Their presence is needed more than that of any other class, to give encouragement and life to the proceedings. Let the sets be filled, with the young farmers of Maine, especially of Androscoggin county.

Improvement of Seed Wheat.

How George Godkin, in an article the "Culture of Wheat," in a recent number of the New York Tribune, gives the following suggestions on the improvement of wheat for seed. The same remarks apply with equal force to other grain crops as well:

"In connection with the raising of wheat into chaff and straw, it is important to have a clean and entirely clean and sound seed, and thorough cultivation; and I believe that our wheat crops might be greatly improved in quality and increased in quantity by careful selection of seed. Let a farmer first determine the best variety for his field, and then, after the time of sowing, select some portion of a diverse head, indeed, and then draw out the most perfect heads—those of the greatest length and the best filled—until he has enough to sow as seed. Put this selected seed on board in the best condition, in every respect, and when the next spring comes, the same should give him thirty or more bushels of seed for the next year. Out of this again draw the best heads, and sow an acre; and so go for several years—the longer the better—and by-and-by he will have some seed wheat in all that will ever be willing to have his name, and he will be a public benefactor."

Talks about Farming.

Our readers will doubtless remember two articles under this title which appeared in the FARMER a year or so ago, and will wish us in welcoming a continuation of the series in our present issue. The writer is one of the best farmers in Somerset County, and will continue his highly interesting and practical "talks" with our readers, from time to time.

State Agricultural Society.

The call for the annual meeting of the State Agricultural Society will be found among the special notices upon our inside.

AUGUSTA, MAINE, SATURDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1870.

NO. 4.

Some Fish Notes—Encouraging to those Engaged in Pisciculture.

Out of the Schoodic salmon hatched last winter in Manchester, by the Commissioners of Fisheries, several hundred were carried to Alna, and placed under the charge of David C. Pottis, of Alna, who furnished a pond, two or three rods square, supplied with spring water, and tended them through the summer and fall. They were about an inch and a quarter in length, when in March last they were put into Mr. Pottis's pond. The other day several of them were brought into the office of the FARMER, measuring five and a half inches in length. This is about the average of the whole brood, while some of them are probably seven inches long. They are now eleven months old, and it will be seen that in nine months they have increased their length more than four times, and their bulk and weight more than sixty-four times. Meanwhile they have subsisted on oyster-coddled mutton—“bonny clabber”—and the cost of their board has been about two dollars. It is the intention of the Commissioners of Fisheries to have these fish kept at their hatchery until they are ready to market, which may be in the fall of 1870, with all of them certainly not later than 1871.

The rate of growth and development of this brood is very encouraging. It was at least a matter of doubt whether confinement in such a narrow space and feed on food so different from that found in their natural home would not dwarf them; but Mr. Atkins assures us that the yearling found in Grand Lake Stream in November cannot approach those in size or condition.

Twenty-four hundred eggs of the same species have just been deposited in Mr. Pottis's hatching house. They are a fresh water species, the “Schoodic Salmon,” very commonly known by frequenters of Grand Lake Stream as “Salmon trout.” Among his trout in another pond, Mr. Pottis has a veritable salmon six and a half inches long, caught by a boy with a dip-net, in the Sheepscot River last June. This little fellow has grown one-third in length since then. He still has red spots and dark bands upon his sides, as all salmon have when young.

We have received a private letter under date of 15th inst., from Mr. Geo. Shepard of Stanley, N. J., in which he gives the names of the recently elected officers of the Oquossoc Angling Association, whose grounds are at Indian Rock, Rangeley Lake, in this State. They are as follows: President, Geo. Shepard; Vice President, Jay Cook; Treasurer, H. C. Faehnstock; Secretary, L. B. Reed, Jr.; Executive Committee, Daniel Todd, L. T. Lassell, Walter Brown, A. P. Whithead, R. G. Allerton. Mr. Page also informs us that at the meeting several resolutions in the form of suggestions to the Maine Commissioners of Fisheries, respecting the proposed general law in this State, were passed. In substance they recommend giving individuals or associations owning or leasing adjoining streams not over 200 feet wide, or around ponds of not over 1000 acres, exclusive right to fish therein; prohibiting by law and imprisonment the placing of pickerel or black bass in waters frequented by trout, and prohibiting placing any fish in public waters except under direction or by request of the Fish Commissioner. Since writing this letter Mr. Page has left for a business trip to Europe, but he will be enlarged by the addition of sixteen pages of additional matter to each number, with the same subscription rates.]

“American Exchange and Review for December. Philadelphia: Fowler & Moon. \$8 per annum.

The Weeds of Maine.

THE WEEDS OF MAINE: AFFORDING POPULAR DESCRIPTIONS AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS IN REGARD TO THE HABITS, PROBLEMS, AND BEST METHODS OF EXTERMINATION OF THE WORST OF THE STATE'S WEEDS. By F. L. Scribner, of the Second Class of the Maine Agricultural College, Augusta: 1869. Octavo, 62 pages.

Our young friend, who has heretofore furnished several interesting articles for the MAINE FARMER, gives in the very neat pamphlet before us, the results of his two years' study among our common weeds, and has compiled a treatise of which much more expert botanists and more practical writers, we suspect, would be ashamed. Definiteness of purpose—say it in the “kindles” spirit—united to the continuance of that energy which we already know this young student to possess, will secure for him, we have no doubt, a brilliant future.

The little work is well described by the title given above, and is furnished with indices of both the common and scientific names, and a glossary of technical terms.

Publications Received.

The Manufacturer and Builder, for November. New York: Western & Co. Monthly at \$1.50 per year.

The Architectural Review, and American Builders' Journal. Samuel Sloan, editor. Philadelphia: Clayton, Remond & Haeflinger. \$6 per annum.

American Recreant, for December. Washington: Samuel Wagner. \$2 per year.

Van Slooten's Eclectic Engineering Magazine. New York: D. Van Nostrand, 23 Murray Street. \$6 per annum.

[The December number closes the first volume of this important publication. And when we see that it comprises over eleven hundred pages of useful information, with carefully prepared index, all will see at a glance what a storehouse of industrial information it is, and at how reasonable a price it is to purchase.

The coming year the work will be enlarged by the addition of sixteen pages of additional material to each number, with the same subscription rates.]

“American Exchange and Review for December. Philadelphia: Fowler & Moon. \$8 per annum.

Farmers' Club Notes.

The next meeting of the Paris Farmers' Club will meet at South Paris on Saturday evening of the present week, Jan. 1st. There will be a full attendance.

PAYNEWOOD. President, Andrew Boxell; Vice President, Josiah W. Davis; Secretary, Treasurer, and Librarian, D. Lowell Lamson. The next meeting will be held at the vestry, on Saturday, Jan. 1st.

North Kennebunk, SOUTHERN DIVISION. President, G. A. Parker; Vice Presidents, E. C. Saeli, B. H. Stevens, S. Hitchings; Secretary, J. G. Soule; Treasurer, W. A. Dibbles; Standing Committee, Wm. Ballou, E. L. Ricker, and H. P. Gouley. At its last meeting it is discussed: “The best Method of Feeding Pork Stock.” The Club starts with about twenty members.

For the Maine Farmer.

Wintering Bees—My Bee House.

A great diversity of opinions exist as to the best method of wintering bees. Some people put them in an outbuilding or chamber, others allow the snow to drift over them, thus warding off the cold driving winds.

While it is not an uncommon occurrence to drift snow over them, it is not a safe or reliable method.

But I believe our poorest pastures may be greatly improved by taking a little pains and at trifling cost.

And this is the case with the bees.

One thing is perfectly evident to me—the farmer, to succeed, must make a specialty of something—he must learn to do something well—or he will never arrive at any very satisfactory result.

Mixed farming is the best method of raising a few acres of land, and I am inclined to think that the enterprise can hardly fail to be of decided interest to all who visit its meetings for the purpose of exchanging ideas upon the science of agriculture and matters connected therewith. The meetings are held at various towns every Friday evening, and the discussions of great interest to me are those on the care of house plants and the keeping up of the staple of raising corn.

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The Maine Farmer.

Augusta, Saturday, Jan. 1, 1870.

TERMS OF THE MAINE FARMER,

\$2.00 in advance, or \$2.50 if paid within three months of the date of subscription.

* These terms will be rigidly adhered to in all cases.

All payments made by subscribers to the Farmer will be creditable in accordance with our new mailing method. The printed date upon the paper, in connection with the subscriber's name, will show the time to which he has paid, and will constitute, in all cases, a valid receipt for moneys remitted by him.

EP A subscriber desiring to change the post office address of his paper must communicate to us the name of the office to which it has previously been sent; otherwise we shall be unable to comply with his request.

COLLECTOR'S NOTICE.

Mr. V. Dalloul will visit our subscribers in York County during the months of December and January.

Mr. J. F. Nutt will visit Northern Penobscot and Aroostook Counties during the month of November.

Mr. S. N. Tawa, will call on subscribers in Waldo County during the months of November and December.

The Closing Decade.

As the business man naturally pauses at the end of each year to compare his financial accounts and determine by the balance what have been the earnings of the year, and every one instinctively hails to indulge in some profitable reflections and strike the balance of his moral account, so as another period of ten years now drawn to a close, our thoughts naturally take a wider scope, and we stay a moment to take a hasty glance at the eventful past and consider what condition of society the present decade will bequeath to its successor.

When the wise ones are considering our social status which seems peculiarly inexplicable, they would seem to be in the habit of settling the questions without "committing themselves" by sagely deducing that we are now passing through a "transition period." So of the social, intellectual, and religious movements of the present day, it is thought by some to be a satisfactory account to say that we are in a "transition period." But at the world is ever moving on, as the spirit of progress must always be in *transitus*, it is difficult to see why every period of time cannot properly be termed a "transition period." But the evidences of progress are, of course, more striking at some periods than at others. When the steadily growing sentiment of a people finally, and to all appearance, suddenly culminates in the open abandonment of old notions and old landmarks, or in the overthrow of whole institutions, we are awakened to the fact that the world is progressing.

The past decade has been peculiarly prolific in these eventful reminders. The progressive tendencies of the moral and political world have been "cropping out" more forcibly than ever before; and the new decade beginning with 1870, will witness a tide of liberal thought throughout the world, apparently at its flood. The combined forces of art, literature, commerce and all the triumphs of democracy, seem to be working in a liberal direction. Never were so many minds in all classes, sexes, conditions and degrees, so strongly moved towards free thought and adventurous speculations as now. This seems to be equally true of the social, political and religious condition of every people throughout Christendom.

In France, instead of the absolute dictatorship which her "divinely appointed ruler" for seventeen years consecrated his tireless energies in building up and consolidating, we now find a most remarkable tergiversation towards an administration responsible to the people. After the election in May had indicated the manifest destiny of the "one-man" power, the last of the Napoleons and the great chief of personal government, who had been living in a little world of his own, flattered by a fawning ministry, showed a strange misapprehension of the true character of that verdict of the people, and for a time seemed disposed to disregard it altogether. At last, however, he read it in the solemn judgment of the people of France against his dictatorship; he remembered the Revolution of '93, and the "Reign of Terror," and began a hasty retreat to those democratic "vidées," which he circulate so industriously prior to the *coup d'état* of 1852. But the French people will not be satisfied with this change of heart and due promises; they will demand a constitutional government with all the checks and balances which underlie free institutions.

The reformatory measures and liberal concessions of Great Britain, have also been noteworthy. We have seen great parliamentary reform, great extension of the suffrage, and the more remarkable measure for the pacification of Ireland—the disestablishment of the Irish church. But this concession has been ascribed to pure fear, and has, therefore gained for the English liberals no credit for genuine concession to a liberal policy. The Irish now demand a settlement of the land question. Many of them have a vague idea that they have acquired the right to the land for which they are now obliged to pay rent. Others believe that they should at least be allowed the privilege of acquiring title to small estates, and no longer remain the serfs tenants they now are. Still further they demand amnesty for the Fenian prisoners convicted last year. One of these, O'Donovan Rossa, has just been elected to Parliament, "out of pure cussedness," it being well known that he could not serve. It is not probable that agitation will cease short of total independence for Ireland.

In our own country the decade which has witnessed the overthrow of the Southern slave power and the establishment of the government on broader principles of liberty and justice, has also fired the soul of condemnation on another institution which has so long been a stain upon our civilization. The gigantic enterprise which have stalked from sea to sea and brought all sections of the country into more intimate relations with each other, have done much to hasten the day when Mormonism must receive its quietus. The moral sentiment of the country has long reproached its infamous practices and must soon invoke legislation to suppress it.

Then there are abunding evidences of a "transition" period in regard to the question of capital and labor throughout the world—on this point a recent writer says: "The Frenchman wants the government to employ him at higher wages than he can earn from the capitalist; the American wants the hours of work cut down without any reduction of wages; and the Englishman wants legal support for the ordinances of the trade unions; but all in reality seek the same thing. They want a new social order in which men shall not only be equal before the law, but shall be nearly equal in their style of living and means of enjoyment. This disturbance in the relation of labor and capital which we witness all over the world, only marks the opening of this transition period, and may not end without producing profound social and political convulsions."

In singular contrast, however, to all these tendencies to break away from time-honored theories, guides and institutions, there is now gathered, in one of the transects of St. Peter's at Rome, that remarkable assembly of men known as the "Ecumenical Council." They have come from the four quarters of the globe, at the summons of an old Priest, and there in a forest of lighted candles, under a cloud of incense, arrayed in the paraphernalia of the middle ages, these Catholic figures heads are gravely considering the "Infallibility of the Pope" and other questions which the logic of the age has long set aside for them. It is to be hoped that they will proclaim their dogmas in the extreme of their absurdity and thus hasten the day of their final extinction.

FINANCIAL IRREGULARITY IN EUROPE. A catalog of a bank at Zurich in Switzerland, has elicited some of his American compatriots in the magnitude of his defalcations. He has been arrested for embezzling extraordinary sums belonging to the institution. An official examination shows that he has robbed the bank as follows: Sum subtracted from the safe, \$78,000; sum received but not entered in the books, \$65,127; sum abstracted by fraudulent entries, 156,622; by forged 1,776,278—altogether, \$233,101, or about \$650,000. He confessed his guilt. When arrested he was en route for South America. A small part of the money was recovered.

The Maine Legislature will assemble at the Capital in this city, Wednesday next.

THE MAINE FARMER: AN

OUR EDUCATIONAL MATTERS are most encouraging. So far as we can learn, the new plan of county supervision—new in Maine, but by no means new or of doubtful utility in many other States—has, so far as can be judged from a single year's operation, worked even better than the more devoted friends of popular education had any conception of. The Board of Supervisors, with a few exceptions, are young and enterprising men, with a just conception of the duties of their position, the high ends to be reached and the means of attaining them. Their individual labors in personally visiting schools, not to observe the scholars so much, as the teachers, and to impress to them new and better modes of instruction, and in the holding of county institutes, have been productive of immense good. A new enthusiasm has been awakened among our teachers, they are made to see their faults, and to find out a better way—for, in fact, poor teachers are the cause of our poor and unprofitable schools. We have as good scholars as ever, but the great trouble with teachers is, they take schools they are unqualified to teach (through the errors of the district system of school management) and too many have no higher "inflammatum" in their work than comes from thinking of the money they obtain at the close of the term. Then again, there are other causes of poor schools, among which may be mentioned a needless multiplicity of text books, the constant changing of text books, irregular attendance and the modes of instruction. To remedy these we should have first, town, or what would be better county, Boards of Examiners for all schools, with a regular graded scale of requirements and compensation, and all teachers should be hired by the year and be under the control of the town or county Board. This would do away with the favoritism in hiring teachers now so common among district agents and prevent the frattering of the school money—which is no better than frittered away by the constant change of teachers. Next the number of text books should be lessened, and a uniformity of text books, the constant changing of text books, irregular attendance and the modes of instruction. To remedy these we should have first, town, or what would be better county, Boards of Examiners for all schools, with a regular graded scale of requirements and compensation, and all teachers should be hired by the year and be under the control of the town or county Board. This would do away with the favoritism in hiring teachers now so common among district agents and prevent the frattering of the school money—which is no better than frittered away by the constant change of teachers. 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